The Digital World

A Round-up Of Technology News From Across The

UNITED STATES

Border agents using gamma-imaging technology on an incoming freight train apprehended two men trying to enter the US illegally from Canada. Nilson Giusti, 41, and Agiles Bezerra, 23, were found in two separate cars on the Black Rock Rail Bridge May 14. Inspectors use gamma radiation technology to scan rail cars, trucks and cargo containers for people, weapons and other contraband.

UNITED KINGDOM

Four British members of the global 'DrinkorDie network', an underground software piracy ring, were sentenced May 6 at London's Central Criminal Court. The men had formed part of a gang that communicated across continents via a sophisticated online network, which was also used to distribute pirated copies of software packages.

RUSSIA

Russian oligarchs are turning their attention to the high-technology sector. As indicators, Russian software exports will top $1 billion this year; SRISA, a pilot IC sub-micron production facility, has put 0.21-micron processing into experimental production; and the two leading Russian chipmakers, Angstrem and Mikron, are expanding their production capacity.

BANGLADESH

A new computer game brought out by Sony and developed by Zipper Interactive, which portrays Bangladesh as a terrorist state, has led to widespread resentment in the country. The mission of the game is to "protect America from enemy forces ƒ throughout the world," and the main locales for the game are said to be Morocco, Poland and Bangladesh.

SWEDEN

People who use mobile phones in rural areas are three times more likely than city dwellers to suffer from brain tumours, a study has found. Professor Lennart Hardell, a cancer specialist at the University Hospital of Orebro in Sweden, said the results definitely point to a link between the dose of microwave radiation and the risk of developing brain tumours.

The country should beef up competition in the telco market or risk falling behind the world, an international telco expert has said. Ewan Sutherland, head of the international telecommunications users group, said Australia ranks poorly among other OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries in terms of technology, particularly broadband Internet services.

Cisco And IBM To Launch Speech-Enabled Solutions

IBM and Cisco plan to deliver to contact centres speech-enabled self-service solutions that combine IBM•s WebSphere Voice Server product and Cisco•s Customer Voice Portal.

The solutions would combine IBM•s integration and application infrastructure software and speech technology with Cisco•s Internet Protocol (IP) communications and focus on self-service speech applications, which together can enable easier deployment of customised speech applications that enhance the customer experience.

The IBM/Cisco offerings will be designed to let businesses extend enterprise-class speech self-service to remote locations across both IP and non-IP networks„including local and branch offices. When banking customers make after-hours calls to their local branch, they won•t be limited to voicemail, or be asked to call another phone number. The Cisco and IBM solutions can allow customers to use speech to interact with centralised automated applications that reflect up-to-date transactions and past history.

Three Incredibly Useful Sites

Files, Freebies, Answers

www.softpedia.com

SOFTPEDIA

A deft download site with scores of free software. The site claims to be the encyclopedia of free software categories such as Science and CAD to the usual games, system, media routine. The neatly arranged interface is user-friendly with no download more than a couple of clicks away. The site also has links to the latest news from the software and media world.

www.dll-files.com

DLL-files.com

What do you do when a program fails to load because of a missing .dll file? Go to www.dll-files.com. This site is your one-stop shop for such problems with over 400 common .dll files available for free download. So the next time your PC shows a •.dll file missingŽ message, don•t wring your hands in despair.

www.answers.com

Answers.com

If you have the questions, these guys will give you the answers. That•s right. Detailed answers culled from over a hundred online encyclopedias and not just links to those answers. www.answers.com has a search engine-like interface and throws up very comprehensive results for your queries.

Publisher's Note

IT's in Us

Maulik Jasubhai

In a lecture on motion and gravity, our bespectacled physics lecturer once taught us about Escape Velocity—the exact speed required for an object to "escape" earth's gravitational pull so that it does not fall back. This velocity—around 25,000 miles an hour—is one of the most important constants in rocket science.

I remembered this figure because India is now on the threshold of a different kind of escape velocity, a constant that will either put India on the growth curve, or push it down a spiral of technological oblivion.

The next 12 months, therefore, could well define the future of technology penetration and usage in India.

For long, India's march on the technology battlefield has been held back, not by its brain power, but by its sheer lack of collective will. It does show up, but in spurts—like when Nasscom lobbies to prevent outsourcing from being banned in the US, or MAIT influences the government to bring down duties and taxes to encourage hardware sales growth.

To be sure, Nasscom and MAIT will only be minor catalysts in our technological advancement—it will be people like us who will drive the engine.

A caveat, though—is technology usage the only measurement of growth?

Former Andhra Pradesh chief minister Chandrababu Naidu, may have known Bill Gates on first name basis, but he did not know what the person on the street wants. Even as Hyderabad bid for a Formula 1 racetrack—which incidentally uses so much technology that the engineers at MIT would be proud—Naidu lost track of what real development means. Here is a simple thing that Naidu forgot—technology is only a tool for development, not development by itself.

Award-winning journalist Thomas Friedman, in his perceptive column for the *New York Times*, recently wrote where India is truly shining—in a village near Bangalore where armyman-turned-software scientist-turned-social worker Dr Abraham George is bringing about a quiet revolution by building a school called Shanti Bhavan for underprivileged children who get to work on PCs every day, and build a life through education and self-respect.

When Friedman met the students there, he played a typing match on the PC keyboard against an eight-year-old girl. He lost.

India's future as a technological powerhouse, you'd realise when you visit places such as Shanti Bhavan, is not rooted in how many outsourcing contracts we win, or how many million cellphone connections we have, or how much percentage of the population can access the Internet.

It is rooted in us. And unless we collectively achieve the escape velocity my physics teacher so passionately talked about, we will be grounded. For life.

Maulik Jasubhai
Publisher and Executive Director, Jasubhai Digital Media

•YAHAN PAR HAMARI kahani offbeat ho jaati hai,Ž said Rajesh Khanna to budding director Asrani while describing a melodramatic movie story in the ever-

Editorial

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Human-Machine Convergence

Kevin Warwick on the need to converge with machines

Convergence Is Not Congruence

Anil K Gupta on convergence in the Indian context

Technologies On The Verge...

Punya Mishra on three types of convergence

The Inevitability Of Technology-Led Transformation

Ganesh Natarajan on change

Note 1: Grey areas show content available on the CD. The DVD also co
Note 2: If you do not want to boot from the CD, remove it from the drive

Tips and Tricks

Ink Cartridges

If you are installing a new cartridge in your inkjet printer, keep it in an upright position for a few moments before fitting it in. This ensures that the ink will be at the nozzle when you are ready to use the printer.

Also, store the cartridge in an upright position, in an air-tight plastic container. If you feel that your prints are not as crisp as they should be, run the printer's head-cleaning utility. This is necessary if you are using your printer after a long time.

Using the Right Paper

The regular paper that you use for printing, ILU, is good enough for day-to-day print jobs. However, at times, you may want to print on special types of paper. Different types of paper are available for different printing needs.

Photo Paper

This is similar to the paper used by film developers, and is designed to produce high-quality images. They come in both matte and glossy finish, and in standard photo sizes. Use photo paper for studio quality photos.

Selecting the correct photo paper from the list can give amazing results especially while printing images

Printing marked selection

When printing selected text, say on a Web page, select the text, and go to File > Print. If you're using Internet Explorer 5 or higher, choose to print 'Selection' in the dialog box that pops up. Most of the newer browsers have the Print Preview in the File menu.

This feature can be very useful if you want to print only selected pages. Use the Print dialog box in Internet Explorer to choose what you want to print. Decide upon the pages that you want to print in the Print Preview dialog box, and then click 'Print...'.

Now in the Print dialog box, enter the page numbers and click OK. This procedure is practically the same for most browsers, including Netscape.

Page setup

Most printing software provide you with a 'Page Setup' feature. This lets you determine how your page is going to print. The first thing that you can set is the margin. This is the distance of the printed material from the edge of the paper. When printing formal documents, you should leave a bigger margin-especially on the left.

If you want smaller margins, remember that you can't set it to zero because your printer just isn't capable of printing from the corner of a page. Thankfully, most applications are smart enough to warn you if you try to do so.

Next, you can set the gutter width—a blank space on the paper that will be trimmed off, or be lost while binding a book. Set this option only if you plan to bind the pages. You can set it to be on the top or on the left of the page.

You can also choose the Page Orientation-landscape or portrait, depending on the orientation you want. Landscape is when a document is wider than it is longer, and portrait is the format that this page you're reading is in—height more than width.

Workshop: Lap Sync

You've just returned from a business trip, and you start the process of transferring files from your laptop to your PC. With fingers and toes crossed, you pray that everything goes well. Even as you sit and search through folders to see which files aren't already on the PC, you contemplate quitting your job. Fortunately for you, we've got a simple solution. All you need do is let Windows XP's Offline files feature help you out of this predicament.

Enabling offline files

First, go to Control Panel > User Accounts > Change the way users log on or off and uncheck 'Fast User Switching'. Next, open My Computer, and go to Tools > Folder Options. Switch to the Offline Files tab, and ensure that 'Enable Offline Files' is ticked. Here, you'll also find options that let you decide about synchronising while logging on and off. Note that these affect all the network drives you set for synchronisation.

Drives available offline are synchronised once you plug the laptop into the network

Map network drives

It's time now to create a network drive. Map a shared folder over the network using a drive letter. On the laptop, open My Computer, and click Tools > Map Network Drive, choose a drive letter, and enter '\\computername\sharedfolder', where 'computername' is the name of your desktop PC, and 'sharedfolder' is the folder you've shared on the desktop computer. This folder should have read and write access in order to synchronise.

Networking offline

Click on the networked drive in My Computer and go to File > Make Available Offline. A wizard lets you set further options when you do this for the first time. This option is available only by going through the aforementioned path. To disable synchronization for a mapped drive, select the drive in My Computer, and go to File > Make Available Offline and remove the checkmark.

Synchronising

When you first make a network drive available offline, all the files are downloaded from your laptop to your desktop PC. Whenever you replug the laptop to the network and log on to Windows, the network drive is synchronised.

The Synchronisation Manager gives details of the process

So you're buying a computer? Here's what to look for, and how to care for it

Workshop: Searching by bar

HP
Pavilion Desktops
for the best in
Digital
Entertainment

Wouldn't it be easy if you could search the Web directly, without waiting for the Web page of a search engine to load? It is, given the right tools. You can set the toolbar of the search engine of your choice (Google, Opera, Netscape, etc.) on your desktop, and search from there.

Download and install Google toolbar from http://toolbar.google.com/ . Double-click the Internet Explorer icon on the desktop to load IE.. Next, right-click on any of the toolbars, you will see additional options such as Links, Addresses, Standard Buttons, etc. Click on 'Google' to load the toolbar. The toolbar has a text field, and buttons—'Search the Web', 'Navigate the Google News site', a graphical button to block pop-ups, an Autofill tool for Web forms, a blog updater and a button that enables or disables the highlighting of search words on the resultant page.

To search, just enter the search string into the text field of the Google toolbar and hit [Enter]. You can also specify Boolean text searches in the same text field area.

The Google deskbar

The Google Deskbar (http://toolbar.google.com/deskbar/) is an add-on to your taskbar from where you can initiate any search directly. It displays the search results in a small window on the desktop itself. The results window retracts after short periods of time. To amend this, right-click on the taskbar and select Toolbars > Google Deskbar A small text search field appears on the right-hand corner of your Windows Taskbar. You can also configure it to open the search link inside a separate browser window. Click on the arrow beside the binoculars, and in the menu that pops up, click on Options. Here, under the Mini-viewer tab, check the 'Display search results within mini-viewer' box. Check the 'When clicking on results, open a browser' box, to open results in a separate browser window. Enable the 'Automatically close the mini-viewer when you leave it' option to close the Deskbar search pop-up when your mouse cursor leaves the pop-up window area. Uncheck 'Use animated open and close' for disabling animation displays.

Other tools

Copernic Agent is another popular search tool that integrates into search engines and produces results available to them.

Download and install Copernic agent from http://www.copernic.com/en/products/agent/download.html. Start Copernic Agent, click on the left-hand pane and select Advanced. A small window pops up for you to enter your search. Click on 'Modify search engine settings' to open a small window that lists all the search engines it uses as reference engines—AltaVista, AOL, etc. Select all for more results, or deselect those you do not want to use. Click OK to exit.

Copernic spreads a wide array of search engines at your disposal. The results are listed relevance-wise, which is indicated in percentages.

Click on the link displayed on the right-hand bottom half of the pane to browse through the results. This loads the Web site in the default browser.

Change the default browser by going to Tools > Options > Browser.Here, you can also specify a browser of your choice by clicking on Alternate, and specifying the path to that browser. Click on OK to close the window.

With so many search tools at your disposal, it shouldn't be difficult to find the information you require!

while maintaining compatibility with 802.11b networks.

A wireless network can work in two modes—ad-hoc and base station. In an ad-hoc (also called peer-to-peer) network, several computers equipped with wireless hardware come together to form a network. All the computers communicate with each other directly. Unless one of the computers participating in the ad-hoc network is connected to a wired network, none of the systems can gain access to a wired network. Three friends meeting in a park and sharing files between their wireless laptops is an example of an ad-hoc network.

The other type of network involves the use of an access point, also called a base station. The access point acts as the central point of the network, and is the link between the wired and wireless networks. An access point can be a dedicated hardware system, or just software running on a system.

In airports and coffee shops, mostly in the US and Europe, access points are provided so that customers can walk into the shops and start using the Internet from their laptops. Of course, it may not be possible to cover an entire airport, or an office, with a single access point. All access points have a Service Set Identifier (SSID) assigned to them, as do all the clients connected to them. When an access point is installed, the default SSID must be changed to increase security, and to prevent users who intend to connect from some other spot.

WiFi has a basic level of security provided at the physical level—Wireless Equivalent Privacy (WEP). But as mentioned, vulnerabilities in WEP have been discovered, and one can't afford to use it as the only security mechanism. However, it is recommended that WEP be turned on. Additional levels of security can be provided at the software level in the form of firewalls. The level of security offered by WEP depends on the number of bits used for the encryption key; almost all WiFi products come with a 40-bit encryption key. A 104-bit encryption key is also available, and it is recommended that the largest available key be used.

Around the World in a Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi networks have risen from IEEE networking standards. The 802.11 IEEE covers the wireless networking standard. Commercial wireless access points were promoted in early 1995.

Wayport, a pioneering organisation in the Wi-Fi space, based in Austin, Texas, set up wireless networks in early 1997. The same year also saw the IEEE 802.11 standards being finalised.

Back in 1999, Apple offered Wi-Fi support along with the necessary hardware. 2001 saw the emergence of many companies that worked on public Wi-Fi, but several have since disappeared. In October 2002, the emergence of WPA, which has now replaced WEP, ensured better security. Intel worked on the Banias CPU architecture that led to the development of the Centrino platform in 2003. This platform works with a Pentium M CPU, the 855 chipset family, and a wireless network adapter that conforms to the 802.11b standard.

In the US, public Wi-Fi access has boomed. Starbucks, the coffee chain offers Wi-Fi services, as does McDonald's. Internationally, college campuses, hotels, airports and bookstores, such as the Barnes and Noble bookstore chain, are getting Wi-Fi enabled as well. There's a large laptop population in the student and white-collar community who actively use these services, both for work as well as leisure.

Strip AD

Hindustani classical music. MusicalNirvana.com gives you all the insight you need into the basics of raag and ghazals. It gets into the nitty-gritty of all you need to know about the history of these two forms of melody. The instruments section lists all the instruments used, with links to the artists accomplished in that sphere.

Cybersangeet.com does a good job of profiling artistes who've given their heart and soul to Indian classical music. It gives a detailed account of the likes of vocalist Mitali Banerjee Bhawmik, sitar player Joya Biswas, tabla player Subrata Gupta and their work in its Profile section. Surdhwani.com talks about the lives of Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, Ustad Bismillah Khan, and a number of members of the classical ilk in its Artists section. Its Indian Classical section, with its Tal, Raag and Vocal subtopics does not frighten you from delving into the intricacies of it all.

Get to know what Indian classical music is through the eyes of the maestro himself—Pandit Ravi Shankar, at his Web site, www.ravishankar.org. His appreciation of Indian classical music highlights the finer nuances of the entire genre.

Pandit ShivKumar Sharma's site (www.santoor.com) profiles the acclaimed santoorist in detail. It also lists his releases, and also reviews them with short clips from releases to complete the picture.

Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, the acclaimed sarod player, who likes to call himself "a slave to" (rather than "a king of") the sarod, bares his love for the instrument at www.sarod.com. The Web site also chronicles important events in his life, and also lets you in on his family tree. It mentions the Sarod Museum called the Sarod Ghar, located at Gwalior, that endeavours to preserve the traditions of Indian classical music.

"There is no essential difference between classical and popular music. Music is music." - Ustad Amjad Ali Khan

"Beethoven can write music, thank God, but he can do nothing else on Earth" - Ludwig Van Beethoven

Go West…

Essentials of Music (www.essentialsofmusic.com) is a Web site that will surely delight the western classical music lover. Whether it's Bach or Beethoven, each has been covered in just the right amount of detail—a few of their works are posted on the biography page to give a feel for their compositions. Its Eras section dissects the evolution that came about in compositional styles with time.

Another such Web site is Classical Net (www.classical.net). It lists information about when classical composers were born, the day they died, etc. There are also exhaustive links to other Web sites that provide detailed information about composers. The reviews and articles posted are concise.

If you want to get to know the people behind jazz, then All About Jazz (http://www.allaboutjazz.com/library/index.htm) is where you need to go. Learn all about Ella Fitzgerald, the first lady of song, Gene Harris, Tony Bennet, etc. Learn about the albums that made them, and this peculiar, yet delightful, kind of music that originated in New Orleans. Louis Armstrong has a special profile page dedicated to him in Profiles. Another interesting Jazz Web site is www.thejazzfiles.com, which digs out interesting facts about the lives of tenor saxophonists Gene Ammons, Johnny Griffin, and pianists Sonny Clark among others.

Rock and Roll? Get the low-down on its highs and lows at www.history-of-rock.com. It swamps you with all the things that happened during the period (1954—1963) when rock and roll took shape, and came into existence as a unique genre of music. Oldies Music (http://www.oldiesmusic.com) tracks the sound right down to the '70s. One of its sections—the Oldies Calendar—tells you all about deaths, births and other ground-breaking events that took place in the current week. Its Oldies Artists sections has links to Web sites dedicated to musicians and pop artists that made rock and roll happen.

Though it sounds like the din in a railway accident, metal music has a dedicated fan following all over the world. If you'd

This band displaced the stranglehold of Iron Maiden on hard rock. More of this at http://www.hardradio.com/history/part1.html

Oh This? Just Something I Composed…

Have you always wanted to say that? Well, now you can! ACID PRO 4.0, available at http://mediasoftware.sonypictures.com/products/acidfamily.asp lets you synthesise your own music with a number of effects to boot.

It lets you have a dramatic fade between tracks, so that they don't sound like cut-paste jobs. It also lets you use as many loops and MIDI tracks as you like. ACID is bundled with 20 DirectX plugins such as amplitude modulation, delay, etc.

Fruity Loops studio (www.fruityloops.com) is another one you should try out. It has nearly 30 high quality effects thrown in for better mixing results. Its inbuilt wave editor lets you edit and record wave files. The editor also lets you reverse the track, add loop points to the file, or record yourself.

Apart from that Fruity Bass Boost, Fruity Stereo Enhancer and Fruity Blood Overdrive are some of the cool sound effects that really add the professional touch to your compositions.

The ATi Radeon X800 XT Platinum features a small heatsink and fan, and both DVI as well as analog outputs

algorithms for anisotropic filtering and full screen anti-aliasing. For video stream processing, the X800 uses the same techniques as do its predecessors, called Videoshader technology. The GPU performs de-interlacing, reduces noise levels, has support for HDTV and applies anti-aliasing, which wipes out the typical artefacts present in MPEG-4 video compression.

nVidia has added a programmable video processor to the NV40, with some features similar to the X800—de-interlacing the video stream, removing blocky artefacts, noise cancellation, and also, support for HDTV. An exciting feature of the programmable video processor is that it can fuse special effects onto the picture, in real-time. Game lighting, for instance, is another exciting feature of the video processor. nVidia has come up with a new technique to render dynamic lighting into computer graphics. The feature should bring in a photorealistic feel into computer graphics, making games more life-like.

The GeForce 6800 Ultra also comes with enhanced algorithms for full screen anti-aliasing, and a new method for anisotropic filtering.

It's the interface too

As of now, both ATi and nVidia are offering AGP versions of the Radeon X800 and the GeForce 6800 Ultra. On the horizon, though, is the new standard in PC I/O—PCI-Express. PCI-Express is expected to debut before the year ends, and will eventually replace the AGP and PCI standards.

It's a matter of bottlenecks—AGP, for instance, was developed to work around the inadequacies of PCI. But if you take applications such as HDTV-video editing, you've just about crossed into a zone that needs the kind of I/O bandwidth that PCI-Express offers. Over the coming months, both nVidia and ATi will offer solutions that will make the transition to PCI-Express from the AGP 8X interface.

What does that mean for graphics cards? They now won't be limited by slower speeds due to the interconnect between the system I/O and the graphics subsystem. It also means that cards can now happily consume more power to run—the GeForce 6800 FX specs already necessitates a 480 W power supply. Industry analysts say that with PCI-Express coming into a position to overtake AGP, card makers will switch over to it. ATi and nVidia are working on bridge interconnects that allow for a smoother transition.

So what's in store?

Processing geometric data for today's games needs fascinating, cutting-edge hardware; nVidia and ATi are developing just such fancy hardware. As CPUs get ever more powerful, system memory moves to DDR2, and PCI-Express makes a move into your desktop, these advanced graphics processing beasts are going to push the limits of gaming with fluid, fast gameplay, even when all the bells and whistles are turned on. It's still going to be a game, and not reality—not yet, at least—but you'll come as close as you ever have with the latest offerings. Gentlemen, start your engines. Let the games begin.

SRINIVASAN RAMAKRISHNAN
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1/2 pg VAD

“I, uh, forgot the root password”

Let’s look at recovering the root password from the boot loader. If you’re using GRUB, then, as GRUB loads up, highlight the Red Hat Linux entry on the GRUB menu, and then press [E] to edit the boot configuration. Locate the following line, something that looks like this:

```
kernel /boot/vmlinuz-2.4.20-0.70 root=LABEL=/ hdc=ide-scsi
```

Type the number ‘1’ at the end. Doing so boots the PC into run level 1-single user mode, where you’re automatically logged in as root. This done, type ‘passwd’ at the prompt. You can enter a new password here.

If you use LILO, try this. At the LILO boot prompt, type ‘linux single’ to get to single user mode. Of course, you may have entered a boot password, and forgotten that as well, which effectively prevents you from adding in any arguments to the boot loader whilst booting.

For wretched times like that, get hold of the Red Hat 9 install CDs. Next, boot using the first CD—the bootable CD—and type ‘linux rescue’ at the boot prompt. The rescue program will run through a couple of the initial install steps, such as setting up the mouse, keyboard and network interfaces.

Edit the GRUB entry to boot into single-user mode

You don’t need to set up the network interface: run straight through the program to the point where you can choose to mount the hard drive with read-write permissions. Click on Continue, and get into the command prompt. Type ‘chroot /mnt/sysimage’. You now get into the root environment (/) with the right permissions. Now, reset the password by typing ‘passwd’, then type ‘exit’ to get out of the chroot-ed environment, and ‘exit’ again to reboot. That’s it, password recovered.

Remember that since it’s so easy to recover a boot password, you need to physically secure your machine if you don’t want someone else using your computer as root.

“I can’t boot into Linux”

If you have your boot diskette, you should be able to boot into Linux, and reinstall the boot loader. If not, no problem—Linux is quite forgiving, and with just a little effort, you can get back to GRUB-ing or LILO-ing your boots.

For GRUB users, boot into Linux using the first Red Hat 9 install CD, and once on the prompt, chroot to the /mnt/sysimage directory. Now that you’re in, run this command to get GRUB working:

```
grub-install /dev/hda
```

This example assumes that you’re loading GRUB in /dev/hda, the MBR of the first IDE hard drive. To install GRUB in the boot sector of the Linux partition (located on, say, /dev/hda5), use:

```
grub-install /dev/hda5
```

If all goes well, you should see no error messages popping up, and a message that looks like "Installation finished. No error reported..." (and so on, for a couple of lines.)

LILO users have it even easier. All you need to do is run ‘lilo’ from the command line after booting into Linux using the install CD, and chroot-ing into the correct directory. Of course, in both cases, you would need to have copies of the config files (the grub.conf and the lilo.conf files respectively, located within /etc) in the right places, and the associated files in the /boot partition.

Boot into Linux using the Red Hat CDs, the rescue-image way

You may also be unable to boot into Linux because of a kernel panic, which occurs when the kernel cannot be booted into. This could happen because of the installation of a newly , (and badly), compiled kernel. Another problem may be a system service that refuses to load, hence preventing a boot. In such a case, boot into single user mode from the boot loader, and start the ntsysv utility; locate the service and disable it from the bootup list. Other problems could include hard drive corruption errors.

recording volume level. Check your recording and adjust this accordingly.

Pages that do not open

I have an Athlon XP 2.4 GHz PC connected to a LAN, running Windows 98 SE and Internet Explorer 6 with SP1. The problem is that when I visit any of the Web sites such as Indiatimes, Yahoo! India, Rediff, MSN India, or others that contain ActiveX control (.ocx) files, I get a security alert message saying, “Your Current Security Settings Prohibit Running ActiveX Controls on this page, so the page may not display correctly.” What do I do?
Abhijit Mukherjee

To get over the problem, open up Internet Options in the Control Panel, and change the settings bar in the Privacy tab to Medium. If you wish to customise the settings, you can do so in the Security tab by clicking ‘custom level’ and defining your own settings.

Moving the bar up and down controls the security

The Disk Management window shows you the disk status

Vanishing act

I have a 40 GB hard disk, split into three partitions. One of the partitions is 13 GB.

Last week, I reinstalled Windows XP on my system. After installation I seem to have lost the 13 GB drive—only two drives appear. What do I do?
Girish Cariappa

Right-click on My Computer and click Manage. Now, click on Disk Management, and then verify that the 13 GB partition is formatted—that is, it should show the status as ‘healthy’. If not, then right-click on the partition and select format. Now, you should be able to see the partition.

Spyware in file system

How can I convert an NTFS partition into a FAT32 partition?

Every time I shut down my PC, I get an error message saying, “Ending Program - wupdater.exe.” What is the use of this exe file? How can I get rid of this message permanently?

When I open Internet Explorer, every time a Web site with the address http://searchcentral.cc is opened. I tried the ‘Use Blank’ option in Internet Options, but it isn’t working.
Sumit Goel

Use Partition magic (www.powerquest.com) to convert NTFS to FAT32.

As far as wupdater.exe is concerned, it is spyware. Go to Start > Run, type ‘msconfig’ and press [Enter] and de-select the file. It shouldn’t auto-start the next time Windows boots up. Delete the file if you want to, but that might crash the software that installed it.

Finally, the IE problem is also due to the spyware in your system. There are spyware removal tools such as Spybot (included in this month’s 101 Freeware CD), which reduce the trouble involved in manually searching and removing each one of them.

Is /boot necessary?

Can I install Linux without creating partitions for /boot and swap? If so, where will the boot loader install?
S. Mohammed Riyazudeen

No, you can’t install Linux without a swap partition, but you can skip the creation of a separate /boot partition. In this case, the boot files will be stored in the /root partition.

Windows is not ready to install

I have a Celeron 1.2 GHz, an Intel i810 motherboard and a 40 GB Seagate hard disk. Earlier, my PC was running Windows 98; while installing ELX Linux, I corrupted my FAT partition. So I removed all the partitions and re-created them, but now even

A virus despite anti-virus

I have a PC with Windows XP. I recently bought an Internet connection pack, but before installing the pack, I installed McAfee Virus Scan Professional Edition. Now, whenever I connect to the Internet, I get the message that says,”This system is shutting down. Please save all work in progress and log off. Any unsaved changes will be lost. This shutdown was initiated by NT AUTHORITY\SYSTEM. Time before shutdown: 1 minute. Message: Windows must now restart because the Remote Procedure Call(RPC) service terminated unexpectedly”. I have tried to detect a virus, but to no avail. What might be the problem?

V Madhav Rao

You are infected with the blaster worm. Download the fix from http://securityresponse.symantec.com/avcenter/venc/data/w32.blaster.worm.removal.tool.html. You need to frequently update your virus definitions. Also keep Windows updated with the security patches that are released by Microsoft from time to time. If you do so, you’re less likely to get caught up in the Web of viruses and worms.

Illustrations:
Mahesh Benkar

such as '34_gOa%20 Trip.JPG', get converted to 'Goa Trip.jpg'. Did we hear "Cool"?

Name your tracks

Not resting at its capabilities to rename simple and complex naming requirements, StopYell manages to automatically rename MP3s by reading their ID3 tags.

Give it a folder full of songs, and it will look in each song to get related details such as Title, Artiste, etc, and build up a logical filename for each file, so you know the song just by looking at the filename.

Rename a file from good_ song.mp3 to Californication.mp3

StopYell changes the naming convention depending on how much information is found in the ID3 tag of a given song. Default and recommended naming conventions are provided by default, but can be changed if needed. Info tags get replaced by the actual information. For example, a file called 'so young.mp3', with '%a - %t(%m)' selected builds up the filename 'The Corrs - So Young (Talk On Corners).mp3'.

ZoneAlarm

Program control

Clicking on Program Control lets you set security levels for programs that may access the Internet from your computer.

Clicking on the Main tab lets you set broad-based rules; set Medium here. To set specific rules for each program, open the Program tab—here you will find a list of programs that have tried to connect.

You can also add programs such as your browser, e-mail client, or a specialised application to which you would like to grant access. For example, if you use file-sharing programs over the Internet, you can add the filename here through the Add option, and set its parameters. Choose between denying access, to allowing outright access, or settle on the program asking for permission every time it wants to connect.

Server rights

ZoneAlarm may alert you about granting server rights to certain programs—this is the case with chat and file transfer software that allow for real-time conversations, such as Yahoo!, MSN or mIRC. You can assign these rights from Program Control under the Programs tab. ZoneAlarm monitors the activity of the programs continuously and prevents unauthorised access.

Full stop

To stop all Internet activity, click on the red Stop button. You can configure the Internet Lock from the Program Control screen, in the Main tab. This is obviously a drastic measure—use this if you are certain that a Trojan or some other major security loophole exists on your computer.

You can also configure certain software to bypass the Internet lock. This is useful, if, for example, you wish to leave for the day, but need a download to complete. In this case, you can give, say, your download manager rights to bypass the Internet Lock.

OFFICE

OpenOffice.org

Turning off AutoFormat and AutoCorrect in Writer

Writer, the word processor within the OpenOffice.org suite, comes with automators, namely the auto-format and auto-correct facilities. While these may be useful, they can also be irritating, especially when text is being corrected or formatted wrongly. For example, with the default settings, it capitalises the first letter of every sentence; every URL is recognised and is coloured to mark it out as a hyperlink.

To turn off these, go to Tools > AutoCorrect/AutoFormat. Under the Options tab, uncheck the options that you don't need. You can choose not to have it auto-correct and auto-format, while you modify the text, or while you enter the text onto the page.

Inserting special characters in Writer

To insert special characters such as the ® or © symbols, place the cursor in the desired position, and then go to Insert > Special Character

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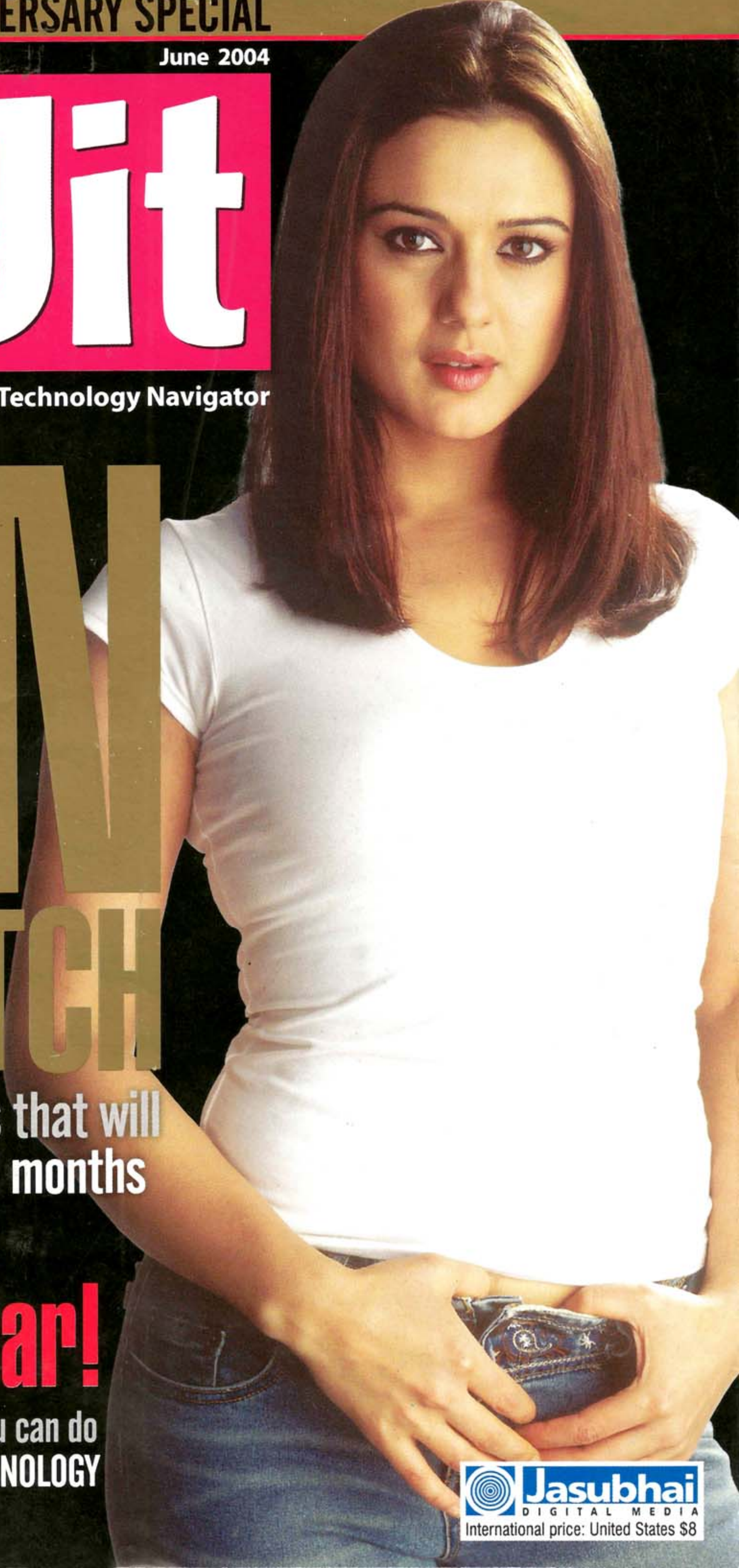

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